

# Curly\*

NORA BARRY

He sits on the ground his long hair flowing in the breeze. Beside him is the burial scaffold of his child.

Behind him are a tree and his horse grazing. Before him are the grasses of the plains. Above him is the azure blue of the sky. What is Curly thinking as he sits there ?

Is he thinking of the horses he must capture and train?

Is he thinking of the hunting he must do to feed his people?

Is he thinking of the men he must lure into canyons and kill to protect his people?

Does Crazy Horse see the future?

Does he see his role in the defeat and death of Yellow Hair at the Greasy Grass?

Does he see himself riding into Fort Robinson with 900 people and 2000 horses?

Does he feel the grip of his former friend hold him while another man bayonets him in the kidneys and his blood drips to the ground?

Does he see the ceiling of the office where he dies rather than the blue of the sky that he loves?

Does he hear the Lakota women wailing?

Does he hear the scratching of the white women's pens as they write back East, "This is wrong. This is all wrong!"?

Or, does Ta Shanka Witco, that most generous of men and that finest of warriors simply feel the loss of a daughter beloved?

*\* Facts in this piece are taken from Larry McMurtry's Crazy Horse: A Life. New York: Penguin, 1999.*